

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims

Claim 1 (Previously Presented) An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a full complement thereof.

Claims 2-3 (Canceled)

Claim 4 (Previously Presented) An isolated nucleic acid molecule which encodes a polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, or a full complement thereof.

Claim 5 (Canceled)

Claim 6 (Currently Amended) An isolated nucleic acid molecule comprising a nucleotide sequence which has at least ~~[[90]]~~95% identity with the entire nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a full complement thereof, wherein said nucleic acid molecule encodes a polypeptide which is capable of functioning as an extracellular nuclease.

Claims 7-9 (Canceled)

Claim 10 (Currently Amended) A vector comprising the nucleic acid molecule of any one of claims 1, 4, 6, 39, 40[[or]], 41, 47 or 48.

Claim 11 (Original) The vector of claim 10, which is an expression vector.

Claim 12 (Original) A host cell transfected with the expression vector of claim 11.

Claim 13 (**Previously Presented**) The host cell of claim 12, wherein said host cell is a microorganism.

Claim 14 (**Previously Presented**) The host cell of claim 13, wherein said host cell belongs to the genus *Corynebacterium* or *Brevibacterium*.

Claim 15 (**Previously Presented**) The host cell of claim 12, wherein the expression of said nucleic acid molecule results in the modulation in production of a fine chemical from said host cell.

Claim 16 (**Previously Presented**) The host cell of claim 15, wherein said fine chemical is selected from the group consisting of: organic acids, proteinogenic and nonproteinogenic amino acids, purine and pyrimidine bases, nucleosides, nucleotides, lipids, saturated and unsaturated fatty acids, diols, carbohydrates, aromatic compounds, vitamins, cofactors, polyketides, and enzymes.

Claims 17-38 (**Canceled**)

Claim 39 (**Previously Presented**) An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting of the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a full complement thereof.

Claim 40 (**Previously Presented**) An isolated nucleic acid molecule which encodes a polypeptide consisting of the amino acid sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:2, or a full complement thereof.

Claim 41 (**Currently Amended**) An isolated nucleic acid molecule consisting of a nucleotide sequence which is at least [[90]]95% identical to the entire nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a full complement thereof, wherein said nucleotide sequence encodes a polypeptide which is capable of functioning as an extracellular nuclease.

Claim 42 (**Previously Presented**) The host cell of claim 13, wherein said host cell is a bacterial cell.

Claim 43 (Previously Presented) The host cell of claim 42, wherein the expression of said nucleic acid molecule results in the modulation in production of a fine chemical from said host cell.

Claim 44 (Previously Presented) The host cell of claim 43, wherein said fine chemical is selected from the group consisting of: organic acids, proteinogenic and nonproteinogenic amino acids, purine and pyrimidine bases, nucleosides, nucleotides, lipids, saturated and unsaturated fatty acids, diols, carbohydrates, aromatic compounds, vitamins, cofactors, polyketides, and enzymes.

Claim 45 (Currently Amended) The isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 6, wherein the nucleotide sequence has at least ~~[[95]]~~97% identity with the entire nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a full complement thereof.

Claim 46 (Currently Amended) The isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 41, wherein the nucleotide sequence is at least ~~[[95]]~~97% identical to the entire nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a full complement thereof.

Claim 47 (New) An isolated nucleic acid molecule encoding a polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence which is at least 95% identical to the entire amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, or a full complement thereof, wherein the polypeptide is capable of functioning as an extracellular nuclease.

Claim 48 (New) The isolated nucleic acid molecule of claim 47, wherein the amino acid sequence is at least 97% identical to the entire amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2, or a full complement thereof.